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RIVALRIES 2011 - DJOKOVIC VS. NADAL

Rivalries

by ATP Staff | 19.12.2011

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Novak Djokovic recorded the first of his six wins over Rafael Nadal in 2011 in the Indian Wells final.

This week ATPWorldTour.com reviews how the key rivalries played out in 2011, beginning today with Novak Djokovic vs. Rafael Nadal.

It was a rivalry that Rafael Nadal had previously commanded, but which Novak Djokovic turned on its head during the 2011 season. The top two players on the ATP World Tour contested six finals throughout the year, with Djokovic not only winning all six, but also claiming Nadal's No. 1 crown in the South African Airways ATP Rankings.

"This guy is doing unbelievable things, so I just want to congratulate Novak," said Nadal after defeat in the US Open final. "What he did this year is probably impossible to repeat. I tried my best in every moment. This year I've lost a lot of finals against him. I have to accept I won a lot in the past and the only thing I can do is to try my best every day to keep improving."

The pair contested two electrifying matches in the finals of the BNP Paribas Open and the Sony Ericsson Open. After prevailing in three sets at Indian Wells, the as-yet-unbeaten-in-2011 Djokovic followed up two weeks later with victory in Miami, in what we deemed to be the second best ATP World Tour match of the season.

Many expected that Nadal would avenge those defeats come the clay-court season, with the Spaniard having won all nine of their previous meetings on clay. But the King of Clay was left reeling as Djokovic played what he declared to be "the best match of my life on clay against the World No. 1" to notch his 34th consecutive win of the season in the final of Mutua Madrid Open, in doing so snapping Nadal's 37-match unbeaten run on the dirt. One week later the Serb was victorious again, once more defeating Nadal in straight sets in a clay-court final at the Internazionali BNL d'Italia.

The pair met again in the Wimbledon championship match, where defending champion Nadal was bidding to win back-to-back Roland Garros and Wimbledon trophies for the third time. The left hander was once again thwarted by the unstoppable Djokovic, who dethroned the Spaniard with a 6-4, 6-1, 1-6, 6-3 victory and subsequently usurped Nadal at No. 1 in the South African Airways ATP Rankings.

"It has been the most special day of my life," declared Djokovic. "I always dreamed of winning this tournament. When you are playing the best player in the world, who has won two of the past three Wimbledons, I had to be on top of my game and I think I played my best grass-court match ever."

Djokovic and Nadal met for the final time in 2011 in a repeat of the 2010 US Open match. A year earlier, Nadal had completed the career Grand Slam with a four-set victory over Djokovic, but the tables were turned at Flushing Meadows as the Serb avenged that defeat with a 6-2, 6-4, 6-7 (3), 6-1 win. The 24-year-old Djokovic became the sixth man in the Open Era to win three major titles in the same season.

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Djokovic vs. Nadal: 2011 Meetings

Tournament	Winner	Score
Indian Wells Final	Djokovic	46 63 62
Miami Final	Djokovic	46 63 76(4)
Madrid Final	Djokovic	75 64
Rome Final	Djokovic	64 64
Wimbledon Final	Djokovic	64 61 16 63
US Open Final	Djokovic	62 64 67(3) 61

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